

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland House Appropriations Committee
By Kate Drabinski, Principal Lecturer
HB0661
State Personnel - Collective Bargaining - Faculty
March 4, 2025
FAVORABLE**

Good afternoon Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and members of the House Appropriations Committee,

My name is Kate Drabinski and I am a teaching track faculty member at UMBC, where I have worked for 13 years. I call on this committee to issue a favorable report to this Bill. The state already grants the right of collective bargaining towards nearly every other state employee, as well as the faculty at our community colleges and the non-academic workforce at our four-year institutions. It is clear that this right should be extended to all higher ed workers in Maryland.

I love working at UMBC. Teaching our students is my favorite thing to do. They are brilliant, creative, and the future of our state. It is an honor. I also work for a great department. My colleagues are supportive and caring. When I had to undergo cancer treatment during the spring semester five years ago, they pulled together to make it possible for me to do my job while doing really hard work at Hopkins oncology. A colleague taught a class for me, another drove me to and from work, and many pitched in to help me with my service responsibilities. I was lucky, and I never forget it, and I always pay it forward.

People in other departments and at other universities have not always had this good fortune. This is why I support the right to collective bargaining. As workers, we should have an enforceable contract that ensure we all have what we need to succeed at our workplaces, even when our lives are going through some kind of upheaval.

I also urge you to support this bill because it gives faculty the *right* to collectively bargain, but it does not force anyone into a union. If UMBC faculty decide we don't need a union, that shared governance is sufficient, then we won't form a union. This bill simply gives us the right to organize if we choose to do so. This should be a right for all workers, and we are one of the last groups of state workers to get these rights. It is beyond past time.

Please move this bill out of committee and to a vote. We deserve a vote.

Sincerely,

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This testimony has been submitted on behalf of this individual by the United Academics of Maryland.